

# Having fun with bridge on line #1

When the opponents force (you?) to game ...

by RAKESH KUMAR



*Rakesh Kumar describes himself as an enthusiast who makes enough errors to have plenty of material for bridge columns.*

In these covidious (is that a word?) times, congress players are lamenting the lack of opportunities to play teams bridge. However, there are some IMP Pairs games available on line, or one can set up a teams match with friends, or a casual table scored as IMPs against the (sometimes incomprehensible) datum.

In one such recent session, it seemed to me that when both sides have distributional hands, there may be some merit in treating the opposition's game-forcing bid as forcing to game by your side ... if that sounds like a crazy notion, here's the story of what happened on two consecutive boards played on BBO. Names have been omitted to protect the innocent (and the not-so-innocent).

On the first one, partner (North) kicked things off with a thin 1♠ opening (only 10 hcp, but a 7-loser hand with 2½ quick tricks) and RHO overcalled 2♥. We play the usual modern approach that a cue bid of the opponent's suit in this situation shows an invitational-or-better raise, so with 4-card support and an 8-loser hand, I bid 3♥. LHO now decided to bid 4♥ on the basis of 5-card support (possibly unwise with no shortage). This was passed back to me.

## Board 1

Dealer N | Vul None

♠ AQ542			
♥ 2			
♦ T92			
♣ AT75			
♠ 93			♠ J6
♥ AT975			♥ KQ863
♦ 865			♦ AQ43
♣ 963			♣ K2
			♠ KT87
			♥ J4
			♦ KJ7
			♣ QJ84

W	N	E	S
	1S	2H	3H
4H	P	P	4S
P	P	X	//

Under normal circumstances I wouldn't have bid game (if LHO had passed and partner had simply bid 3♠) but as it seemed possible the opponents could make 4♥, I went on to 4♠, more or less as insurance. RHO figured this wasn't going to make, so he doubled. However, RHO proved to be wrong, because his double persuaded me to place him with ♦AQ and all I lost was a heart, a diamond and a club.

The chat bar exchange after this hand was thus ...

*LHO: Maybe I shouldn't have bid 4♥*

*Me: I treated your 4♥ as forcing to 4♠*

*LHO: LOL!!*

The very next board then took the idea a little further:

**Board 2**

Dealer E | Vul N-S

♠ AKT5	♥	♦ K532	♣ T9752
♠ J832	♥ KQJT9	♦	♣ Q843
♠ Q76	♥ A7543	♦ J86	♣ A6
♠ 94	♥ 862	♦ AQT974	♣ KJ

W	N	E	S
		1H	2D
4D	5D	X	//

This time East as dealer bid 1♥ and I overcalled 2♦. LHO showed a game-forcing raise of hearts with shortage in diamonds by bidding 4♦. Partner promptly bid 5♦ and RHO, perhaps trying to compensate for the loss on the previous board, once again expressed his disapproval of the contract.

In the chat bar, I wrote: *Looks like partner treated your bid of 4♦ as forcing to 5♦!*

LHO led ♥K. This was ruffed in dummy and a small club led. Although RHO took the trick with ♣A and returned a trump, it was now possible for me to ruff all 3 of my hearts in dummy and claim a doubled overtrick.

Maybe there's something to the crazy notion after all ... 🟩